

firm the popular belief that the weather has a dependence upon or even an indirect relation with the condition of the moon. The origin of this belief in the lunar influence can be traced back to Arabia and the astronomers of Assyria and Chaldea, and it is maintained in various forms by all peoples that use the Arabic language or inherit the old Arabic folk lore. We know of no recent investigation into the connection between the moon and the Arabian weather, but all studies bearing on European or American weather show that the lunar influence is inappreciable. We believe that the only plausible exception to this statement is to be found in the studies of Mons. A. Poincaré (an engineer and meteorologist of Paris, and not to be confounded with Prof. H. Poincaré, the eminent mathematician). His study of the international daily charts of the Northern Hemisphere, published by the United States Signal Service, seems to indicate that when the moon is far south of the equator it has an appreciable influence in causing a general movement of the atmosphere southward, and vice versa when she is north of the equator; but this movement is only appreciable when we take the average barometric pressure for several days or a week; it is essentially a fortnightly tidal wave, and is not known to have any apparent influence upon the temperature, cloudiness, rainfall, or wind. It can not, then, be spoken of as an influence of the moon upon the weather.

The students of lunar influences are at present rejoicing in the patronage of a wealthy Russian railroad engineer, Mr. Nicolai Demtschinsky, of Torbino, Russia, who has flooded the scientific world with his prospectus and the first few sample numbers of a journal devoted to the exact prediction of the weather by means of the lunar influences.

The study of the influence of the moon on the atmosphere is certainly legitimate, but the study of the influence of the sun is also important, and it would be suicidal to neglect it. At the present time the trend of modern physics is to show that the sun's radiation produces all the thermal and most of the electric and optic phenomena of the atmosphere and that the modification introduced by the moon is scarcely worthy of consideration. The new journal states that—

It aims to be the depository for all information upon the question of atmospheric ebb and tide, including therein, first, the influence of the moon on the atmosphere, and, second, the investigation of the upper strata of the atmosphere.

But, of course, every scientific journal is willing to publish investigations on these subjects. Investigations conducted by rational methods are precisely what is meant by science. All that has hitherto been found out about lunar influences and the upper strata of the atmosphere has already been published in scientific journals and memoirs. If any one in the United States has anything worthy of publication on this subject, he can make it known in the columns of the MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW or the American Journal of Science even more easily than by sending it to Torbino, Russia. In fact, we can not but suspect that most of the articles published in a miscellaneous way had already been rejected by the editors of recognized scientific journals as containing assumptions and statements directly contrary to the known laws of nature. One may have the best of observational data, and yet go far astray when he attempts to reason upon it. The data that has been furnished to Mr. Demtschinsky by the Chief of the Weather Bureau during the past few years, and which is now quoted in his monthly journal, was communicated for his information, and the reader should not infer from the text of the journal that the Weather Bureau has any reason to adopt new doctrines that are contrary to observed facts and scientific principles.

#### ERRATA.

The following corrections should be made in the MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW for 1898, Vol. XXVI:

Page 359, column 2, lines 12 and 13, after *v* in the formulæ insert the minus (—) sign.

Page 410, column 1, line 32, for XVI read XVII.

January, 1901, REVIEW, page 6, column 2, line 27 from bottom, for 460° F. read 492° F.; line 25 from bottom, for 530° read 562°.

## THE WEATHER OF THE MONTH.

By ALFRED J. HENRY, Professor of Meteorology.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WEATHER FOR MARCH.

March, 1901, was characterized by the rapid movement eastward and northeastward of lows, many of which divided after crossing the Appalachians, and by the complete reversal of the conditions which obtained in the previous month as regards pressure distribution and movement of storms. About 70 per cent of the highs moved eastward along the Gulf coast and passed over the Atlantic in the neighborhood of the Carolinas. Temperature was above the average, except in the eastern Gulf States, Florida Peninsula, and the southern Plateau, and precipitation was irregularly distributed, but on the whole fairly abundant.

#### PRESSURE.

The distribution of monthly mean pressure is graphically shown on Chart IV and the numerical values are given in Tables I and VI.

The most noteworthy feature in the distribution of monthly mean pressure was the breaking up of the ridge of high pres-

sure which in an average month stretches from Florida northward to the Dakotas. Mean pressure in the interior of the country was everywhere below normal by about the same amount as it was above normal in the preceding month. It will be remembered that during February, 1901, pressure was remarkably low over the North Atlantic and New England and high in the interior of the country. These conditions are reversed in the current month.

#### TEMPERATURE OF THE AIR.

The distribution of monthly mean surface temperature, as deduced from the records of about 1,000 stations, is shown on Chart VI.

The month as a whole was warmer than usual. In the eastern Gulf States and on the Florida Peninsula, also in the Southwest, including Nevada and Colorado, temperature was below normal, ranging from 2° to 3°. In all other parts of the country, however, the temperature ranged from 3° to 6° above the seasonal average. Maximum temperatures of 100° and over were registered in the Rio Grande Valley, and maximum temperatures above 80° were quite general in southern Georgia, Florida, in the lower Mississippi Valley, the western